

Testimony in Support with Amendments to House Bill 960 Education - Public Schools - Asian American History Curriculum Requirement

House Ways and Means Committee
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The Maryland State Education Association supports, with amendments, House Bill 960. This legislation would require the State Board of Education to develop curriculum content standards for a unit of instruction on Asian American history in public schools in the State, require each county board of education to implement the Asian American history curriculum content standards beginning in the 2024-2025 school year, and require each county board to ensure that a unit of instruction on Asian American history is taught at least once during elementary school, once during middle school, and once in a history course required to graduate from high school.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3-million-member National Education Association (NEA).

Students deserve history education that is inclusive, accurate, and complete, and MSEA wholeheartedly agrees with the importance of ensuring that content standards cover Asian American history. It is essential that students receive a comprehensive multicultural education that cultivates respect and appreciation for the contributions of Asian Americans throughout history, which have been too often omitted or downplayed in curricula. This legislation is especially relevant considering the sharp rise in anti-Asian hate crimes and incidents in recent years.¹

¹ *Anti-Asian hate crimes increased 339 percent nationwide last year, report says.* NBC News (2022).
<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/anti-asian-hate-crimes-increased-339-percent-nationwide-last-year-repo-rcna14282>



In revising social studies frameworks, it is critical to ensure that updated information is incorporated into the frameworks rather than added on to expand the quantity of instruction required. Educators have finite instructional time in the school year, and it is essential that in improving the accuracy and completeness of our curricular models, we do not reduce the overall time available for each standard. We look forward to continuing to work with the sponsor to ensure that Asian American history instruction is incorporated into existing coursework through the revision, rather than expansion, of elementary and secondary curriculum content standards.

MSEA supports thoughtful efforts to ensure that social studies curricular resources are up-to-date, rigorous, and reflective of the experiences, contributions, and history of communities as diverse as Maryland's student population. It is essential that students' history education includes comprehensive coverage of Asian American history, and that educators are engaged in every step of the implementation process.

We ask the committee to issue a Favorable Report, including the above referenced considerations, on House Bill 960.